

**William Short to Thomas Jefferson, June 29, 1790,
Note, from Thomas Jefferson and William Short
Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W.
Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

William Short to Thomas Jefferson

Paris June the 29th. 1790

Dear SirPrivate

My last private was of the 14th. inst. On the 25th. I sent you my No. 34. together with a duplicate of that of the 14th. I have as yet recieved only the letters therein mentioned & of course remain in the same state of anxiety & uncertainty as when I then wrote. That however has not influenced the activity with which the execution of your commissions was begun. Petit & the packers assure me they lose not a moment. I mention to them frequently the necessity of sending off these things before the river gets too low, & whilst there is a probability of finding vessels at Havre bound to New-York. I have written to MM. Lemesurier & La Motte on this subject. They mentioned there were two or three vessels to sail for America in the course of this month., none however for New-York at that time. But I hope there will be little or no delay at Havre as vessels frequently arrive there. Petit thinks the packages will be all ready by the 15th of the next month. As he will not go it will not be possible to send the animals you desire. Besides the season would have prevented the procuring some of them as I am told.

You will undoubtedly be much astonished to learn the interpretation which is put on the lease you renewed last year with Count Langeac. It is said by those with whom I have consulted that you are obliged to keep it three years to count from the day of the renewal.

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That was certainly not your opinion. Langeac's brother who is his attorney here, during his absence, told me this was his opinion & that he was told by the notary who made the lease that there was no doubt on the subject. On my

assuring him that I knew you had a different opinion, & that I was convinced Count Langeac thought as you did, he said he would immediately write to his brother on the subject. I don't doubt however that whatever may have been his former opinion he will now claim the full extent of the lease. His answer is not yet received. I mentioned to his brother that your wish was to get Congress to lease the house for their legation. Perhaps the hope of that may engage him to act with candor in this case. You have another chance also which is his being able to sell his house, as he has desired for some time. I have consulted Mr. Grand on the lease. He said there could be no doubt that you were obliged by it to keep the house three years from the day of the renewal. He consulted also his notary who says no other possible interpretation can be put on it. Still I am persuaded that was by no means your intention, as I have heard you frequently say you could leave the house when you pleased giving six months notice. Mr. Grand & his notary say that the prorogation of the lease is an absolute renewal of it, & of course the three years of which you were obliged to keep the house cannot be counted under the former lease. I am exceedingly sorry for this misunderstanding as I am quite at a loss what to do. I hope you will lose no time in writing to me on the subject, but I fear if Langeac insists there will be no means of avoiding this interpretation of the lease. It is evident that the notary made use of expressions which he knew would have that force, & he says now it was the intention of you both. The house is necessarily to be paid for by you until six months to count from the 1st of July, for they say also that notice must be given from one term to another, & cannot be given in the middle of a term. However the brother received my notification when offered & agreed in writing it should count

from that day if the expressions of the lease authorized it. He has fully persuaded of the contrary as he said. On the whole, & at worst you will be obliged to keep the house fifteen months longer than you expected, & that not entirely lost as it may be rented for your

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account, or Langeac may be induced to abandon his claim for a small sacrifice perhaps. It is relative to this art of the business that I wish you to write without delay. There is another means also by which this affair may be remedied. You think Congress should lease the house for their legation here. That being the case I cannot have a doubt it will be done, for I am firmly persuaded that whatever you approve of with respect to foreign affairs, will be done. It is impossible it can be otherwise. Nobody could be in that department without having a decided influence, but your case is a particular one. Your knowledge of what is proper abroad, the confidence which the President must necessarily place in you in whatever relates to Europe & that supported by his personal attachment to you & reliance on you; in fine the manner in which you were forced into the office you now hold—all shew evidently that you must necessarily make such regulations as you please relative to the foreign establishment. In the instances where you do not judge proper to use your influence it may be otherwise, but it is impossible that any opinion should be adopted relative to foreign establishments in contradiction to yours. All these considerations induce me to hope that no great inconvenience will result from this interpretation of the lease.

I spoke to Tolozan relative to the present & mentioned to him that you were prohibited by the constitution from accepting one from the King. He told me

that in that case he would not accept any thing either. Sequeville gave me the same answer & in order to prove that the etiquette was such he gave me the whole history of his appointment & long services in the place he holds. The essential was that the present made by a foreign minister was a consequence of the one made previously by the King. Baron Grimm & Blome had both told me that I should necessarily receive this answer from Tolozan and Sequeville.

The Chevalier Bourgoïn arrived here some weeks ago in order to go to Madrid as Minister ad interim, the Duke de la Vauguyon being recalled. Bourgoïn is still here & thinks he shall not proceed further on this business, I know not for what reason. He is the intimate friend of Carmichael, & told me he had just received a letter from him in which he tells him he

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would not remain longer at Madrid even if he should be appointed Minister, that he was determined to return to America & live in retirement &c. On my mentioning that Carmichael had written me he should resign if you did not accept the department of foreign affairs, & that I hoped he would continue under that circumstance at Madrid, he seemed fully of a contrary opinion, and observed that he was subject to the spleen & moments of disgust which rendered that place disagreeable to him. Still I do not think myself that Carmichael has any intention of retiring, judging from the letter which he wrote me.

The new English Ambassador has arrived here, but lodges as yet in an hotel garni. The Ambassadors was present last Sunday. He is a young man about two and thirty. As to talents to judge from fame & a little conversation with him, moderate, as to experience, none. You know the force of Lord Robert. I cannot help sometimes thinking with myself that if the interests of England may be entrusted to such youth & inexperience might hope to discharge the duties of an inferior place. But fate that decides these things reasons perhaps otherwise, & it is for mortals to submit without murmuring to its decrees. Your horses are not yet sold. Several offers have been made en l'air, but when accepted were withdrawn. A person is to come & try them to-morrow who seems in earnest. If not they shall be sent to the market where they are sure of being sold but probably at a low price. Adieu my Dear Sir & believe me unalterably your friend,

W: Short

RC (Jefferson Papers, DLC)